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Editorial

Editorial Foreword

Dear esteemed readers,

It is with great pleasure that I write this foreword for the Special Issue of the International Review of Law (IRL). This Special Issue includes the reports produced by the TradeLab International Investment Law Clinic students, a clinic course offered at Qatar University (QU) in collaboration with others (The Graduate Institute, Geneva, and Georgetown University, Washington DC and Doha) and under the National Priorities Research Program (NPRP) grant, the main funding program of Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) (please see: <https://www.tradelab.org>).

QU continues a tradition of offering innovative courses. The TradeLab clinic is an example. It offers a unique opportunity to thoroughly analyze trade and investment law and jurisprudence through a combination of practice and theory. Highly qualified students worked in small groups under the supervision of three professors, three mentors, and three beneficiaries on specific legal questions related to trade and investment law coming from “real clients”. Expert-led workshops on substantive topics related to the projects were organized. Skills sessions were held to improve library research, legal writing, and oral presentation skills. At the end of the semester, the groups submitted written legal memos and gave oral presentations of their projects.

The students were mentored by Santiago Wills, Head of the International Trade and Investment Protection Practice, Lewin & Wills, Colombia; and Sarah Mathew, TradeLab Coordinator, Georgetown University in Qatar. Seventeen students were divided in groups for the projects. The latter were run simultaneously with two identical clinics abroad: Switzerland and the USA. All mentors and students were connected.

This IRL Special Issue includes an introduction by Prof. Joost Pauwelyn, Co-Founder and current President of TradeLab, and Dr. Theresa Carpenter, Executive Director, Centre for Trade and Economic Integration, Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies. The introduction provides an in-depth overview about TradeLab, outlines the challenges of “scoping” and “scaling” TradeLab, and highlights main achievements and plans.

The ensuing pages also comprise the results of the projects conducted by the TradeLab clinic students.

The first project (supervised by Prof. Talal Al-Emadi, Prof. Francis Botchway, and Prof. Rafael Brown for the beneficiary Qatar Council of Ministers - Office of His Excellency the Prime Minister and Minister of Interior) assesses the effects of the land, air and sea blockade imposed by Bahrain, Egypt, the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia, and the United Arab Emirates against the State of Qatar. The report assesses whether the blockading countries comply with the World Trade Organization’s (WTO) rules on the essential security interest exception.

The second project aimed to assist the Qatari mission to the WTO (beneficiary) with their negotiation of export restrictions related to food and agricultural products. Under the guidance of Prof. Talal Al-Emadi (supervisor) and Mengyi Wang (mentor), the students examined existing disciplines, evaluated current proposals, and tabled new negotiation proposals.

The third project sought to answer whether Lebanon Transparency Association (beneficiary) should accede to the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative. Under the supervision of Prof. Francis Botchway and mentorship of Dani Kabbani, the

students analyzed the costs, benefits, legal requirements, impacts, and alternatives of the accession.

I would like to seize this opportunity to highlight that this is a transition period for the IRL journal from Hamad Bin Khalifa University (HBKU) Press to QU Press, a newly established nonprofit publishing house dedicated to promoting the dissemination of peer-reviewed and research-based publications in fields including social sciences, humanities, STEM, and more.

All the special thanks go to the authors (QU students) for their contributions without whom we would not have this Special Issue.

Special thanks to QU Press team, namely Dr. Murielle El Hajj, Head of Production, Sabine Saad Al Awad, Senior Acquisitions Editor for Social Sciences, and Dr. Okasha El Daly, Head of Acquisitions, for their contribution to publishing this Special Issue.

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